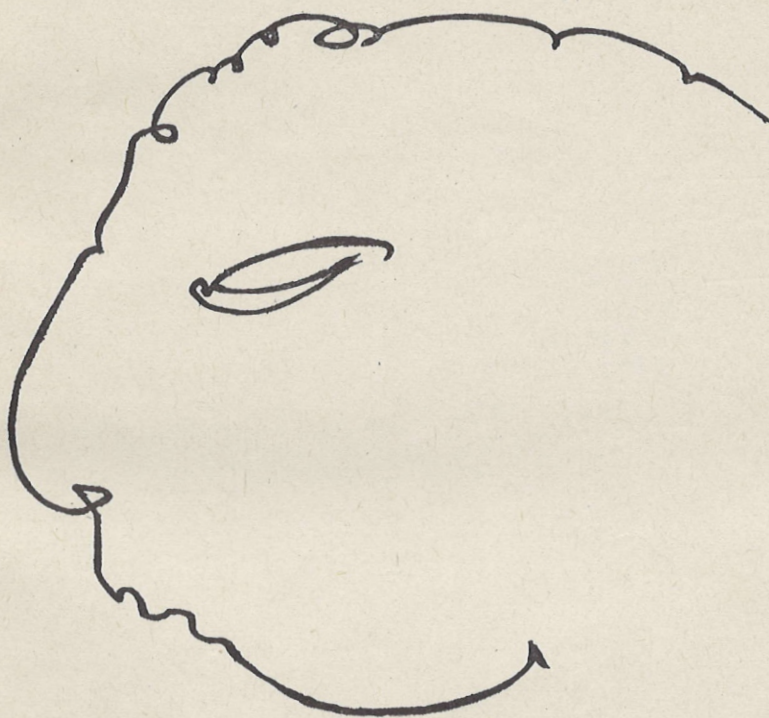




ATLANTIS
OR
THE CRYING OF THE WATERS



G. A. WATERMEYER



Head of Poseidon, the bull-bodied
Sea-God who fathered Atlantis.

— *Drawn by Author.*

Introduction

Many interesting things can happen in a bilingual country like South Africa, but surely one of the most remarkable is that an Afrikaans poet who grew up in the Karroo — where English is virtually a foreign language — who was educated at an Afrikaans school and an Afrikaans university, should suddenly turn to English as a medium of expression.

A poet, it has been contended, can only say what he really means in the one language which defies translation; the idiom and the figures of speech of the mother tongue. But Godfried Watermeyer upsets this theory by his rare ability to express inner meanings in two languages.

Born in 1917, Mr. Watermeyer's first and only collection of verse to be published thus far, *SEKEL EN SIMBAAL* (Sickle and Cymbal) appeared in 1948 and won him instant recognition as one of the most gifted of Afrikaans poets, not only from Afrikaans critics and fellow-poets, but also from bilingual writers like Uys Krige and English poets like Guy Butler. While Prof. Butler considers Godfried Watermeyer's rendering of the spirit of the Karroo to be superior to that of Olive Schreiner, the Afrikaans poet and critic, Prof. W. E. G. Louw, writes that he has turned the Afrikaans word from water into wine; that

he has taught the language a new dance and opened up new lyrical possibilities for Afrikaans.

To me the most striking qualities of his verse in SEKEL EN SIMBAAL, which by the way is mainly sensuous in character in contrast to the spiritual tendency of his English writings, is its originality and great sensitivity, its almost breathtaking imaginative force and that subtle felicity of sound and rhythm which defies analysis, linking this particular type of poetry closely to its twin-art, music.

An introduction to "Atlantis or The Crying of the Waters" would be incomplete without reference to the trying circumstances under which it was written. A year prior to its completion, *Mr. Watermeyer had not even contemplated writing English verse.* His inspiration came in the beginning of April, 1953, in a singular manner about which he intends writing a book. By the end of April his poetic inspiration was completely broken off by adverse circumstances and he only resumed writing in January, 1954, when he was confined to bed in a state of semi-paralysis induced by a weakening of the spine. By the end of February, 1954, the book was

completed, thus being actually written in a period of three months. In addition, Mr. Watermeyer, who has spent at the most three months of his life at the sea-side, had not seen the sea for thirteen years when he wrote this book *in which the principal character is the ocean*.

If it is indeed true, as the poet believes, that this work contains a vision from veiled antiquity and is at the same time prophetic of the future, then his choice of English as a medium is a happy one; for "Atlantis or The Crying of the Waters" deals with a theme relating to all mankind, and must therefore be presented in a widely read language.

April, 1954.

ELISABETH EYBERS.

Dedicated to my wife

YOU were the chosen to tremble
the song my lips would assemble,
and you have been patient, my dark one,
yearning the thing to be done.

When all were faithless around me
you were the angel that bound me,
bending me back to the task
praying me true to the task;
stirring my strength when I
was flung to a muted cry,
wise in your counsel when none
would welcome the word I had done.

You have been summoned to waken
the rhythm of this that is shapen,
and you have been trustful, my white one,
dreaming the thing that is done.

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The High-priest Reborn

GIVE this man room to move his mind
along the stairs that I unwind
in circles of enshrouded light;

Grant this man peace that he may sight
the seven shadows I have cast
upon the land whose dream has passed;

And glow your hearts to grow his strength,
he moves from far and knows not whence
I lead him in the Dawn that stands
with hooded eyes above your lands.

Lament of the Seer

MY head mongst you is a history
of things lost,
and the lifting of my voice a language
launched from the stars,
a cry
faltering the future.

Yea!
the Gods tore me that my limbs
move not upon the words,
as storm-clouds circling the sun
shake him to shadow;
and my strength went from me as a lake
emptied by the rivers:
I have no silence of sleeping waters
no movement
no song of piped reeds;
for my voice is a voice of deserts
of death
and the ending of dreams.

No birds stir me at dawn, no birds
 seek me at dusk;
only the grey waves creeping
only the lost winds weeping
 dust
 to
 my
 dust.

Prelude to the Poem

*The hooded Heads of Wisdom rear
to strike thyself, and all who steer
a course that cries against the way
no man may swerve, no man may stay.*

I

CENTURY after century more alone
since first I moved out of stone;
less bound by the earth
less bonded by mankind,
forever driven
to create the clearer image of God
out of the darkening voids
of the future

II

I moan for words, oh Mouths of Time,
I move among my severed selves,
a wounded and a wombless thing
breath-bonded but to bear and bring
the surging sentence of Your cry
from far beyond the bended sky
unto this world, unto the throng
of wakened hearts who sense the song.

III

Stay here and write, while lifted hands
bless you from many unseen Lands;
stay here upon this destined night
oh beauty-blessed one, and write
the unsung sadness of the air
almost too sweet for you to bear . . .

IV

I am a broken, bended thing,
oh pity me and give me wing
to rise again upon the flow
of guided words that gleam and glow . . .

V

Be not the sadder one who strays
worn, wisdom-withered ways,
but bend with deeper hearkening ear
to save the secrets and to steer
the slim ship groping for the truth . . .

VI

Here will I sit, a muted cry
upon these lips that could not die
until the consciousness so stirred
to restless groping, throbs the word.

VII

Be with us here, be with us yet,
oh heart by sins and sorrows bled
to wielding willingness, that wears
its own sad state upon the Stairs . . .

VIII

Ah, that my groping could but grip
and hold to speech the soundless lip
of Wisdom wasting on the air,
ah, that my spirit could but bear . . .

IX

Silence and vastness, and My Voice
speaks in the quiet of thine own heart . . .

X

Shadows eternal shape and move
their conscious cries unto my mind,
shrouded they stand, the blessed Ones,
wondrous their eyes . . .

XI

I am thy unseen soul that looks
upon all letters that the Books
of Time record, and I have ways
of steering thine across the waves . . .

and now I bid you, write this down,
so many songs are doomed to drown.

Two Visions

I

A FATAL vision of the sea
came rearing through the night to me:
sky-swaying waters swept and bore
kingdoms away for evermore;
and as the waves came bending by
I heard the drowning moan and sigh,
while drifting dark from bay to bay
the sadness of their faces lay.

Then from the dead lips came a cry,
though all were drowned, the dead gave cry
unto a single voice that rose
weeping above the waves to close
about the hearts of those who steer
the nations on the ways of fear.

A voice that gathered great with grief
and prayed compassion, begged belief
in all the common good that lies
common to all the hearts, and dies
not on this earth, but ever speaks
unto the stricken and the weak.

Then saw I lost Atlantis lie
sunk in a sea-shaped cleft; a cry
came from the pillars and the stones
and gathered life to shell-clung bones,
till men of godlike shape and form
rose radiant above the storm
that swept the others down; and peace
was written on their brows to cease
strife on this earth, whose shores and seas
are cycled by the destinies
of seasons vaster than we know.

And I was not and nothing more
than shaken echo to a call
beyond the clamour of this earth.

II

A mystic vision from the sea
came gleaming gradual to me,
and shaped my sight and snowed my speech
to shine a message that will beach
beyond the tumbling of this age,
bearing upon its crest a sage
whose wisdom-whitened words will gleam
a revelation of His dream
upon our earth, God loved and sought
more than the planets He has wrought.

A vision of the Christ to be:
our Saviour risen from the sea
of centuries beyond the time
that man has taken note of Time.

And He will walk our paths again
and be with us and heal again,
and link His love unto our earth
and bind a bond between the serf
and him he serves, and sing us free
in songs of utter ecstasy;
and teach a wisdom man forgot
that likened man on earth to God
with strength spiritual to hold sway
o'er winds and waters of his day.

And He will walk in pain again
and be with us and bleed again,
to be a symbol of the snow
that lies beyond the tidal flow
of birth and death, and ever calls
the spirit to ancestral Halls.

Seer of the many seers He sent
to serve and light the soul He bent
and seeded in a secret shape,
and cycles to a purer shape
through aeons vaster than we know.

And I was not and nothing more
than fluted echo to a call
beyond the singing of this earth.

Atlantis

The coming of Poseidon

*The great, bull-bodied God that came
shaking the foam to sun and flame.*

I

THE waves have drawn us to the deep,
the waves have veiled us and we sleep
among drowned pillars and the Stone,
the Secret One, that gleamed its own,
wise-guarded in the pillared place
where winged Poseidon sired our race;
the great, bull-bodied God that came
shaking the foam to sun and flame,
lord of the seas and all that lie
low where the waters curve and cry.

Formed to the sacred Bull that bears
a human head upon the Stairs,
He soared above our beach and saw
a mortal maiden, fit to draw
a cry from all the Gods; then swept
steep down to earth and with her leapt
high on the mountains, where a cave
ledged secret o'er the bending wave.

He broke the land and swung the tide
to guard her close on either side,
then godlike willed a mighty wall,
a templed place with pillars tall
to veil her ever from the eyes
of humans, and against the skies,
lest Spirits other should behold
her beauty and be overbold.

II

True-boned she was and there gave birth
to ten broad sons, who ruled our earth,
the seas and all the lands that lie
low where the waters curve and cry.

Ten who were wise and walked with God
steering His single way, and wrought
vast vaulted temples to enshrine
the wisdom of His word, and shine
a single guide to all who came
ruling the realm in His name.

III

Here gathered virgin maids, whose eyes
had sight beyond the space of skies,
and priests dwelt here, whose word was Light
and true and treasured to His sight;
and all were pure of heart and more
of Edened peace slept on that shore
than ever land had from the Sun:
our Father great, the bounteous One.

IV

The lakes were smooth with fish, the air
and fields vast-flocked with birds of fair
and rounded flesh. All that earth breeds
of footed things unto man's needs,
stirred in the woods or browsed the plain
where priests had strength to summon rain;
and fruits of various taste and form
ripe'd round the year, while never storm
struck rancour to the days that went
tranquil as kine to pasture bent.

V

Great beasts of mammoth strength knelt low
to bear our burdens and to go
the ways we would, while horses famed
beyond the Arab strain, that maned
out of their breed, ran swift and bore
us tireless as eagles soar.

Here first the feline thing was tamed
and here the boar-hound called and named;
while lioness and the leopard lay
peaceful along our paths, for they
had fear of none and man of none
and never wanton death was done.

VI

Four streams, wide-watered, moved to sea
as move the winds, and barges, free
of toll bore the interior trade
to King and Princes where they swayed,
each in his province and apart
but bonded to the common heart.

VII

Shrined on the central plain, we willed
a mountained pillar, piled and built
of smooth three-cornered stone that swept
beyond the heights that men have leapt
in structured steepness to the sky . . .

The gleam of orichalcum* shone
its breadth and lofty length upon,
while on the artful lower walls
we wrote the Law the Virgin calls
in trance upon the destined days
the Gods lent wisdom to our ways.

Here all were gathered numbered years
to learn the Law; and sacred steers
that bred and brooded in the hall,
were slain in sacrifice, to call
a pledge of strength between the earth
and Him who gave us godlike birth.

* *An undefined substance, mentioned by Plato
in his history of Atlantis.*

And here was ritual done to song
by thousands of a chosen throng;
a slow and subtle dance begun
moving to music with the sun,
formed to a rhythm flowing deep,
that grew and gathered wings to sweep
in great exultant waves the soul
back to its Being and the Whole,
from which it bent apart to be
a bodied self above the sea.

VIII

Newly awakened and aware
how white upon the Singing Stair
the Great Ones stand or stir Their wings,
we fashioned wondrous things in stone,
in shaded wood and mammoth's bone;
on golden plate we etched and laid
slim jewelled shapes to carven jade;
earth's noblest metals, gathered deep
gave gate and pillar loftier sweep,
while gold and green al'baster glowed
wherever steps or fountain flowed.

And on Poseidon's mount their grew
as King gave place to King, the new
and ever vaster shrines that gleamed
to glory Him whose dream they dreamed.

Flung wide and over all the land
the templed cities rose, to stand
their terraced steepness to the sky;
glowing aloft the inward eye
to consciousness of shapes that star
sublime beyond the shapes that are.

Here Beauty was a thing refined
beyond mere wealth; the last defined
small virtue in the courts where Kings
brought homage to the one who sings
a gifted song, or makes his own
in music; draws or shapes in stone.

XI

Staunch ships we had that voyaged swift
upon all seas, and bore the gift
of portioned knowledge to the lands
we bartered with; there many hands
were taught to melt and manage ore
and build the shrines our cities bore;
while in the port the traders lay
sparring a forest to our bay . . .

Thus great Atlantis shaped to be
the central sun of shore and sea.

The rape of Atlantis

*She dances with the unseen Heads
of Wisdom woven in her hair.*

I

SLOW-MOVING now with sinless hands
slim-lifted to the sunward Lands,
she sways the circling of the rays
that strike the Stone on destined days
the Gods have chosen to unfold
their wisdom to this twain, who hold
sway o'er Atlantis and the four
great rivers seeking each its shore:
the visioned Virgin, Mirabes,
who bears the Token on her breast,
and I the high-priest, I whose name
the centuries must still acclaim . . .

II

The chanting of the chosen throng
lift louder in the Sun-God's song,
while throbbing soft and low, the drums
begin the dance to Him who comes
with breaking of the day. The flutes
find elfin voices with the lutes,
the cymbals clash, and clashing steer
Arshaka's dancing fawns and deer
lithe-leaping up the sacred stair.
Hind to the horned one, pair by pair
they close around her, stepping slow
moving the music's rise and flow.

The golden snakes of Ersetis
uncoil their slender shapeliness,
and rising to her rhythm, rear
the outer circle round the deer.

Between the fanged heads and the horned
I move with her, she yet unwarned
of that dark love, whose clasp would sleep
Atlantis dull-eyed in the deep.

I dance with her and veil my eyes
against the Serpent-head that lies
cold-glittering where my head would rest
between the parting of her breasts . . .

III

The Golden Eagle on the Stone,
eternal guard, the watcher lone,
stirs him majestic, rising slow,
winging the music, circling low.

Eagle and high-priest, snake and deer,
moving around her singing clear,
swaying subtle, dancing slow
rhythm the dawn that comes to flow,
gleaming faint on the golden plate
facing vast to the Eastern Gate.
Mirrors of gold around the hall
echo the light from wall to wall,
glowing a growing dance to meet
the great drums rising in their beat.

The Serpent sleeping round the Stone
in shrouded coils she sees alone,
ungathers to the music's tide,
rearing his stoned head, waving wide.

Serpent and Eagle, priest and deer,
moving around her singing clear,
swaying subtle, dancing swift
rhythm the light that comes to lift
over the mountains, growing bright
pulsing His golden wings to flight . . .

Sudden the Sun-God leaps and comes
winging His way on the beat of the drums,
slinging His spear through the Eastern Gate
striking gold to the golden plate;
flashing the mirrors, breathing light,
flaming the Temple, throbbing light.

Swaying towards Him, dancing deep
she symbols His great wings in their sweep;
drifting asunder, circling wide
we ebb away from the music's tide . . .

Mystic He meets her, meeting all,
air and earth and the water's call;
brow of the heavens bending to earth
shaping to Knowledge, breeding Birth.

Moving ecstatic, dancing steep
the shining God and the Virgin sweep,
swaying supple, rising one,
flowing the rhythm of the Sun.

Mystic He mates her, mating all
air and earth and the water's call,
moving above her, dancing high,
soaring the Temple, sweeping sky . . .

IV

Slow, throbbing slow, the drums release
the tension of the dance and cease,
while drifting downwards, down, a leaf
lost by the winds, her hair a sheaf
of shadows veiling trance-dimmed eyes,
she flows upon the steps and lies,
a swallow swept in wings of sleep,
a swallow shut, but breathing deep;
till from her parted lips there comes,
in voices deeper than the drums
yet sweeter than the flutes and all
the music that the song-birds call,
the wisdom that the Gods decree
to rule Atlantis and its sea.

V

The Princes round the King arise
giving me greeting with their eyes;
and in the silence I am heard
I name the Law and speak the word
to guard the cities and to guide
the swift ships steering with the tide
of speeding winds . . .

But even as I speak, she comes
dancing the rhythm of the drums,
and while I name the sacred Law
I see her still, as last I saw
her lying in her trance, forlorn,
touched by the wide-winged God and torn
of all her strength, her loosened hair
dark rivers flowing round the bare
snow-glistened beauty of her breasts . . .

VI

A gleaming thing, lithe and alone
she dwells, the shadow of the Stone;
wrapt in the silence He has wrought
about her and about her thought.
And no man seeks her there and none
dares near the priestess of the Sun,
for he whose gaze lifts to her thighs
dies more than death and never lies
his breast to breasts of woman more . . .

I, only I, ward of the halls
have entrance to the secret walls
of shining mirrors, where her feet
sing in slow dance or fling in fleet
gay gambols with the nimble deer;
and ever wakeful ever near
the hooded heads of cobras sway
their cold-eyed vigil night and day.

VII

I came unbidden to her there
and paused and waited on the stair,
to glimpse her secret in repose
sleeping amongst her dark-eyed does . . .
But snakes reared sudden up, a deer
stamped his sharp hoof and clarion-clear
his warning whistle steered her sight
to where I waited on the flight
of orichalcum steps that gleam
light to the light the mirrors beam.

Serene and slow she came to me
moving her dance unconsciously;
the horned deer ringed her round, a snake
swayed slim before and in her wake,
shy-stepping came the gentle does
gleaming the distant mountain-snows.

Clear-eyed and cold but throbbing near
she stood, a maiden and a seer,
and questioned me with those deep eyes
wherein the dawn of earth's first skies
eternal dreams. I spoke in speech
that groped beyond my words to reach
unto her breast; but she was veiled
against my words, yet bade me be
and led me to her couch, where she
playing her zither sang those sweet
far melodies, that ebb the beat
of passioned longing and arise
yearning celestial for the skies.

VIII

Oft after this I came where she
was wont to dance and sing to me,
and slow between us shaped a bond
of friendship and a thing beyond.

No more the horned deer warned, but tame
circled around me when I came;
yet ever when she danced or played
an earth-bound song, the cobras swayed
rearing between us, shielding her,
and on the Stone I felt Him stir
His golden wings, the sacred Bird
who senses thought or spoken word,
and wakes the Temple with His cry
when one of mortal mould would lie
in sleep with her, upon whose breast
the Gods had drawn their sacred Crest
to shine the symbol of their peace
with Great Atlantis and its seas.

Forever thwarted, loving deep,
an evil thought shaped in my sleep.

IX

The mirrors paled upon the wall
the day the Eagle died, the tall
dome-headed Bird who rules the tide
and guides each day to tranquil glide.
Done to His death by what I took
beyond my taking from a Book
whose secret Seal no priest may break,
and broken, rears a Thing awake
that slumbers in a nether-birth,
granting it entrance to the earth
and power on the land to be
a force of evil destiny . . .

When stiff He died upon the Stone,
the Serpent sleeping round the Stone
went with a great cry forth, and all
that night lamenting shook the hall
where unseen voices wept forlorn
beside the Bird the Gods had born.

X

She sat upon the rounded Stone
and sang to me. The waves did moan
and moved more restless as the day
grew dim upon the shores and grey.

My eyes were not upon her face
but bent and broken into space . . .

Sensing my sorrowed thought, she came
calling me tender to my name
as not before, came swaying close
as not before; and then I rose:
tense-eyed I stood and told her all,
speaking my sin, yet making call
of all love's mortal ecstasy
until she trembled like a tree
beneath my voice. Then with her name
exultant on my lips I came,
sweeping the snakes aside with word
of deep command, breaking the herd
of deer apart — she bared her breast
in silence as I came — the Crest
shone hard upon my eyes . . .

But even as I turned to go
her voice came throbbing veiled and low
in speech that spoke yet lied to me:
"I am the Virgin, I am she
who mates with God and slumbers not
against the breast of mortal men."

I raised my eyes and swayed her then;
oh I was subtle and my words
smooth things of pleasure, stained her soul,
till in her limbs and in her eyes
I sensed the fatal yearning rise
red as the moon on summer nights . . .

I bound her then with secret lore
to know no peace or slumber more,
until she came out of her own
to be with me and be mine own.

XI

She flung the great door close and ran
wide-eyed at me, her still face wan
and shaken neath wild-tumbling hair;
and Death was dreaded in her stare,
as thwarted cobras struck too late
upon the beaten outer plate.

I rose and trembled as she came
and had no voice to sound her name . . .

Then, breathing deep, she paused to be
again a thing apart from me,
and swaying close, she swept me by
to stretch her on the couch and lie
with half-closed eyes that sought me not
and smile-curved lips that spoke me not . . .

I sat apart and let her be;
and now Atlantis and its sea,
the templed cities with their ships
and men with death about their lips
came crying through the night to me,
bidding me go and let her be.

I sat as one with fever burned
as one to die; then slow she turned
and stretched and stirred her limbs to song,
thrusting her pointed breasts to song
of songs within my blood, that cried
against my soul, and ever cried
to be against her gleaming thighs
the restless ocean in its rise,
and be upon her breasts and eyes
a bird with yearning for the skies . . .

Leaning her lips upon my name
she moved to rhythm as she came;
her eyes were darker than the sea
and bent a strange light upon me,
as smiling slow she bared the Crest
and drew my head against her breast . . .

XII

All through the night the restless deer
stamped round the sacred gate, and near
close to the inner wall I sensed
the seeking cobras rearing tensed;
and through my chamber-door there came
a cursing without tongue or name,
that sank its shadow in my brain
and crept a numbness o'er the pain
love bent me by, while in the air
a Presence hung whose sorrowed stare
bade me depart . . .

A cold sob shook me and I rose,
but soft her hands came, seeking close,
and low, white-throated laughter dared
me free the flaming bird I snared
with my red words . . . I turned to her
and turning felt the pillars stir . . .

Oh sadness of the face I yearned
more than the beauty that it burned;
oh wisdom of the eyes I sought
beyond the flame her body brought
to mine own limbs, as flinging far
we fled the earth, but failed the star . . .

XIII

Smooth-shouldered now she sleeps upon
spent shadows of the night I won
and ever lost . . . but I slept not,
for now the dread thing love forgot
loomed loud within my heart to beat
the tread of thronging vengeful feet.

I felt them round me, all around,
sensed then how I was brought and bound
upon the bitter place to be
a symbol of unchastity . . .
Felt how the curved blade stung and I
shake all of earth with that last cry
of manhood, and the maidens know
me henceforth as the shaftless bow,
and men look pity as I pass . . .

Great hatred of all Eve burned me
to loveless lust; I turned to be
the last embittered song my thighs
would sing unto a woman's thighs . . .
Brute-like I turned, but in her sleep
such sadness was, that all that steep
and savage passion ebbed my shore
to one lone cry to be no more . . .

The rounded moon came while I wept;
shone wistful on her face and crept
its secret fingers on the bed
where we lay wedded and unwed . . .

More deep, more bitter than *my* fear
the mystic moonbeams creeping near
wrapt all my body and my brain
unto the numb and knowing pain,
that what I broke, bled deeper than
the sorrows of one chastised man . . .

XIV

Out of the shades, revolving slow
the visions gather form and glow:

A Thing of blood and blackness came
and drew Its own dismembered name
upon her breast; then broke and wept
upon the couch where love had leapt
to weave our wanton limbs in one
with death that could not be undone . . .

I saw and sensed . . . and in her sleep
she moved and moaned: "the waves are deep,
the Gods are muted now," she cried;
"dark depths are gaping wide, and wide
the wakening seas sway upon us!"

Wings struck her then,
and summoned from the world of men,
forlorn and lone, with weeping bent
her spirit touched mine own, and went . . .

And still her moon-white body lay
a thing of rare and chosen clay
the Gods had moulded to perceive . . .

But from the rounded lips I kissed
three serpent-heads struck out and hissed
their venom on the sun-blessed land
and peace and hope came to disband.
A hound-toothed head reared up and bore
the country forth to strife and war . . .

Then from the womb I pierced, there rose
a dark, drowned thing with dripping nose
that sat upon the couch and said
with muttering mouths, "all now are dead."

XV

So died I too, but death turned me
and shrank away, I sought the sea
and went adrift upon the tide
and called upon the waves and cried
to save the land that I had slain,
to stay the coming of the rain.

And ever beating at my breast
I felt her soul which could not rest.

The coming of the Beast

CROWDS gathered on the shore and saw
a wounded beast with breasted claw
come drifting inward with the waves.
Its eyes were dark, uncovered caves
of broken hope, and slow it swam
bearing upon the coast, a dam
of water broke the beach and spray
ran shuddering back unto the sway
of restless waves, that climbed and grew
before the tidal flow was due.

Rearing its seven heads it came
slime-bellied on our soil, a name
of darkness gaped around each head,
and what we slew gave birth to dread
of filthy frogs, that croaked and ran,
bleeding the beaches till each man
was shaken in his strength, and turned
white-faced to where the altars burned . . .

Then Sundra flung the great spear down
and drummed his warning to the town . . .

But Noonta, with her eyes of ash
danced shrunken arms aloft, to clash
of wristed scalp and hounded fang
and made the were-wolf's cry and sang:

“they stir from out the ocean's womb
to croak Atlantis to its tomb;
they spell the spilling of the tide
and lap the waves where they have died:
in vain, in vain and all in vain,
you lie your death where you have slain;
the sea is hunting sun again
the rain is raining red again!” . . .

Atlantis sinks

*Lone voices of the stranded geese
still echo in the landless air.*

I

AND then a night of darkness bent
black-brooding o'er the continent;
the waves drove tumbling to the reeds,
the heron screeched and fled the reeds
and winged unknown and winged afar . . .

No moon was there, no faith-flung star,
as loud and ever-loud and more
the seas came sounding o'er the shore,
while dark and down and lowering more
the rain-clouds rammed upon the shore,
where all was hushed and no wind heard
and all light crushed and no tree stirred . . .

The earth lay gathered taut, a deer
sensing the leopard crouching near.

II

Shoulder to shoulder, running fast
the doe and the grey were-wolf came past;
buffalo came and antelope
nostrils wide to the mountain-slope.

Swaying their trunks, the great ones came
lumbering past, and the small ones came
pattering past, and the bellied snake,
swirling the dust fumes in its wake.

And still the earth lay, tensed to stone,
shrinking the leopard, crying stone . . .

III

Flame-fanged He leapt and struck the earth;
volcanoes flung to livid birth,
the winds from all the quarters bore
howling upon the land and tore
the great trees down; steep fountains gushed
up to the sky, vast rivers rushed
down from the sky; while roaring wide
over the beaches broke the tide . . .

IV

We ran the plains, we fled the hill,
we crouched the top-most crags, and still
with greater surging force the seas
ran over rocks and swallowed trees;
sweeping the drowning high, to tear
the living from their hold, and bear
all in the waters where the spark
of heaven flashed them drifting dark

Slow, one by one, the peaks, where crawled
beast over human, mad and mauled,
sank down and out of sight to be
lost sentinels beneath the sea.

And cry of death was never heard
for wind and waters held the word.

V

Where low above the leaping sea
we clung the last sky-lifted tree,
a light came moving through the dark
growing and gleaming to the ark,
and Noah's ship went drifting by,
a shape of peace beneath that sky.

The bark whose building we had jeered
and spat upon and cursed, came steered
by One who stood the deck upon
in seven arcs of light, that shone
the waters tranquil where He went,
and broke the rain apart and bent
the rearing winds His path away,
and three stars rode Him on His way . . .

Far out into the night He went
lost to our sight; the waters bent
their fury round our hold again
while beating stronger came the rain;
and still our hearts went yearning far
unto the brightness of that star,
and still our eyes ached through the rain
to see the blessed bark again
that stilled the seas, and left us more
abandoned than we were before.

VI

The last and fatal wave came flung,
mounting above our heads, and hung,
stayed in the sky by hands that we
sensed all about but failed to see . . .

Then high o'er wind and waters' cry
a great voice rang and tore the sky
asunder, and an Angel came
bearing a sword-blade, flung with flame.
His left foot struck the sea, His hair
flowed back upon a vast white Stair,
and awesome o'er our heads He hung
arching the wave, then wheeled and flung
the sword unto the sea-swept sky
that opened wide with wounded cry . . .

He bent His gaze upon us there
and suns were circled in His stare,
as drowning roar of wind and rain
His great voice smote our souls again:
"Ali! Ali!! the faithless die.
Ali! Ali!! the faithless die."

★ ★ ★

The sea-arc'd sky swept down on us,
the shuddering earth shrank under us,
and woven in the web of waves
we sank to earth-forgotten caves.

I

OH be with us, oh be and bear
our message to the outer air,
and tell the circling earth that stands
not fast, not firm upon its sands:
“your rocks are breathing loud with fear
and things that grow, the things most clear,
are shaken by the fatal breeze
that rises with the rising seas.”

II

The axle of the earth is ground
to ashes by a hell-toothed hound,
that hovers with red-hating eyes
to grasp the shape of all that cries
God-bidden for the fairer isles
gleaming beyond untrodden miles.

III

Let me not speak my thoughts alone:

The earth is but a worn-out bone
soon to be tossed unto the waves;
and man will cringe again in caves
and watch with shuddering eyes of fear
the low-browed mammals slowly rear
their monstrous shoulders out of mud
to tear the tree-tops and to glut
their slithering bellies with the snow
of wide-cupped flowers, fruits that grow
(salt-flavoured by the shell-strewn sands)
beyond the reach of hunters' hands.

The rape of the Atom

Oh mankind thou hast wrought a wrong
that echoes in the godless throng
of nerveless nether-things, now browed
with entrance to the earth . . .

I

THE atoms shivering in the air
are burs of animal that bear
the semblance of unshapen souls;
and he who halts their God-bound goals
and bars the way for evermore
to shapes that in the nether-core
still godless lies, he brings a birth
of death unfathomed on this earth.

For now the motion positive
un-cycles crying negative,
and that which guarded in a glove
of secret mould moved on to Love,
now broken open to the glare
of light its being cannot bear,
unwinds, and whirling gathers Hate
to strike the earth, when all too late
man learns that what he pierced was part
of his own shrouded, deathless heart.

II

You tore the limbs of God apart,
you pierced the inner atom-heart,
the cycling cog that cogs with all;
and in the wounding sounds the call
beyond the earth, beyond the wall
of seven-bounded veils that sheathe
our planet from the Hate beneath.

III

Leave and let all earthly things
until the tide, the Lunar, swings;
for lower shapes lurk in the air
than many human eyes will bear;
and He who dreams upon the Stone
of Time and Tide, Atol, the lone
breath-breeder of the human race,
stares west-ward into ashen space,
and sees beyond the bearded plains
of Tuscany, the told-of rains
sway sweeping southwards . . .

IV

Upon the night, upon the noon
of Zombra, when the eagled moon
wing seven zeniths in the sky,
a call will sound, a stricken cry
from all mouths moving with the earth . . .

Oh wombless thing, oh thing whose birth
man broke to serve his shapes of fear;
what price of death, what price to clear
the moaning mountains that remain!

Atlantis sinned and sinks again.

*The Destiny of England and the
Low Lands lying to the West*

Sing then unto the day that stands
with drooping head upon the lands
of death . . .

The first forgotten coming of the Norsemen

A MIGHTY ONE with shrouded face
and sweeping, shadowy wings of space
swerves sudden near from unseen Lands,
breaking the earth-bound veil, and stands
vibrating with eternal light
beyond my shoulder to the right.

The lurking thing upon my left
crawls in itself, a cringing cleft
of broken hope and hate's despair,
and bleeds away upon the air
from which it merges day by day
to claw my inner peace and stay
the bidden writing of my hand,
moving to save the shadowed land
from losing all the gleaming years
had coined upon the heads of peers
since Arthur's time, and far beyond
to Agragwa, the First, the blond
full-bearded leader of the host
that struck upon the Celtic coast,

gale-driven from the Northern dark
upon a straining, slim-necked bark,
swept by the seas despairing days
far from the known and welcome bays
of kindred shores . . . And when the tide
which hurled them in its foaming stride
high on the wild, froth-ridden beach,
had curled unto its lowest reach,
they stepped upon the land, whose soil
would yield unto their children's toil.

Dark faces glared at them from trees
and shrank away, as thronged in threes
of armoured breasts, they strode along
and came upon a chanting throng
of weird cave-hiding men, whose dance
shivered and broke before the glance
of broad-sheathed swords, that never leapt
into the strangers' hands, but slept
with glittering eyes, which they could sense
like animals; gripped in the dense

fear-writhing age, before the bow
would steady them, and fires glow
of evenings in the mouths of caves,
to turn the mere-dark things the waves
and forest-gloom sends out to prey
when twilight grows its cloak of grey.

What shapes . . . ?

WHAT shapes lie secret in the year
that draws its circling seasons near
upon the shores of Western Lands?
What spirits tremble on my hands
and stir my groping mind to spear
the future in these thoughts of fear?

Move, move your hand . . .

MOVE, move your hand and write this down
or many more may drift and drown
upon the sudden wave that sweeps
from East to West, and rearing, leaps
the coast of Andra, when the sun
stands seven shadowed days upon
the fatal Sickle that the Twelve
Great Ones will hurl across the Shelf,
to summon death, and beat the tides
back to the land in fatal strides.

The cliffs of Dover

GREEN shadows of the sunken lands
fall outward o'er the fated sands
of Bétel, and the broken beach
sways keening to the Sea-God's reach . . .

Exalted eyes are gathering tears;
slow beats the Drum as Wandang rears
His waves above your shores to be
the endless ocean to the sea.

Upon the cliffs that Dover bore
the centuries will gleam no more.

Sleep not my brothers

SLEEP not my brothers, sleep no more
but watch the white and wounded shore
with restless eyes, lest on the day
the sudden seas no hand will stay,
sweep you unknowing from your bed
to drown among the drifting dead
and broken mouths, that ever cry
unto the lands, whose cities lie
unshrouded in their earthless sleep,
forsaken in the secret deep.

Sleep not, sleep not, but watch and pray;
the last dawn wings upon its way,
the last sun shivers to the sky,
the last night crouches with the cry
of death and death upon its ears;

a cry to echo down the years
mankind will walk the earth He wrought,
and blessed with much, and loved and bought
free from its sins with that great flow
of blood His own Son gave to glow
your hearts upon a surer way;
but yet you broke the Law to sway
that which by right was never yours,
and what you took now takes your shores.

Farewell song of the Western lands

I

THE night has gathered about us
the shadows descended upon us ;

our day has gone from the sky
and Death is a bird, whose cry

circles us closer and closer,
seeking us closer and closer

to fold his grey wings on our breast
folding Europe to rest.

II

Before the year has summoned its snow
we will be sleeping in seasonless snow ;

and as we go weeping away from the earth,
loth to depart from this our earth,

and as we go weeping away to the caves,
the dawn of Atlantis leaps from the waves.

The Great Awakening

The wisdom-woven years have slept
deep slumber in the ocean-cleft.

I

BEAUTY and Truth and Love,
arise oh white-winged Dove
and bear the 'Twig unto the shore,
and built your nest upon the shore,
when from the ocean's womb again
the new earth rises to the rain
of heaven and the blessed sun . . .

II

Afar, afar a light is seen
moving to ever-brightening day,
and words are wave-born things, that mean
a motion merging from the clay
of bonded consciousness, a birth
of things sublime upon this earth.

III

I will obey and speak the Law:

The bluntness of the ages thaw
and knowledge long distilled and kept,
wisdom that in the waves have slept
since first the Deluge burst the beach
and drove the wailing, wide-winged geese
adrift upon the rain-swept air
with land nor rock their feet to bear,
now merges from the inner Mind
of Yesterday to steer its kind.

Wisdom that grain on golden grain
bleeds outward from the heart's own pain;
wisdom that weeps and wounded cries
against the darkening hate that lies
blood-tumbled on your guilty plains,
resisting sun, resisting rains . . .

IV

The Books are opened now, and see
what God has given unto thee;
the lives of all that lived and won
redemption from the Chosen Son;
for you to take, for you to mar,
or shroud in beauty that will star
beyond all wisdom that the waves
have brought to mankind from the caves
that shelter in the Secret Sea.

V

Guard and let this knowledge go
only to those who yearn and know
the inner singing of the tide,
the wider whisperings that glide
across the old wind-shaken years,
to guide the dream unto the day
that now upon your mountains gleam.

The High-priest's incantation to the song

*I must fulfil that which I broke,
undo the wrong I wrought, invoke
far Eden's peace in songs that gleam
faint rays of God's unveiling dream.*

I

THE wings are upon us my brothers,
my sister
slender amongst you;
she, whose grey eyes will gather
dew in this season of songs
descending upon us.

Come my breast-kindred, foregather
close to my heart,
come my lone sister, come leaning
near to my heart;
for I am the high-priest of Song
humble amongst you,
and I have been bled for my bread
too long here amongst you,
muted
too long.

But now the wings are awaking
crying
"REBIRTH!"
now the Great Swallows are with us
singing
"REBIRTH!"

And I am beating a drum
and the echoes tremble your souls,
and I am lifting a trumpet
and the call has come to your souls,
and I am finding a flute
and the tune is touched to your souls;
shapen to sound and the rhythm
rearing the winds and the waters
gathers to flight:
each to his own
and the ever
bondage we bear to each other;
each to his own
and the ever
music we make to each other,
echoing Eden.

II

Out of the circling of spirits
 shivers the song,
out of the touching of spirits
 trembles the song,
out of the merging of spirits
 morrows the song;
 given the word and awaking,
striking to snow and a-shaking
 all of the corners of earth
 with this
 the voice of rebirth.

Come my white spirits, my far ones
 seeking your song,
come my soul-kindred, my near ones
 gather your song,
come my snow-swallows, my swift ones
 steepen to song:
 each to his own
 and the ever
bondage we bear to each other;
 each to his own
 and the ever
music we make to each other.

III

And you will come walking with songs
waking the streets with your songs,
shaking the stars with your songs;
brothers of mine and my sister,
swallows of snow and of swiftmess
summoned to sing:
each to his own
and the ever
bondage we bear to each other;
each to his own
and the ever
music we make to each other,
echoing Eden.

The wings are upon us, my brothers,
my sister
silver amongst you.

Atlantis reborn

I

WE will arise again when comes
another destined by the Drums
of Doom to lie beneath the wave,
and weep repentance to the cave
where Time first stirred with Song to be
a shore above the Timeless Sea.

We will arise again to be
formed features from the formless sea,
and walk the earth and breathe the sun
to do the good that was undone,
before His brow was crushed to flow
the sadness of our sins to snow:
the Hornless Lamb, the Flawless One,
who wrought more than the old Gods won.

II

Our wisdom and our ways will be
great pillars gathered from the sea
to steady earth unto the sky,
and gleam a light to steer him by;
the seer who treads the vast unknown
singing his people to their own.

And bird and beast and plant and stone
will know that man has come to throne
the godlike strength within his heart;
still clasped in clay, yet conscious part
of those great Wings that ever beat
a rhythm song may never meet.

III

The Bull will come again, reborn
out of the earth, and bellow Dawn
and bellow Light, and lead His steers
to stand a peace of thousand years
upon the hills and vales of earth,
One cycles to a purer birth
than ever mountain snow has shone
since that far day the maid was won.

Closing song of the Atlantean Spirits

We became mortals and sinned
as the world about us have sinned,
and we are awaiting rebirth
even as this our earth.

Out of the dawn of the world
we come to awaken the world,
you who are muted and I
lifting together a cry
to summon the wisdom that went
away when the waves were sent . . .

The peace of a thousand years
comes guarded by sacred steers;
and all that the Prophet read
will be as the Prophet said
in the Golden Book, on whose pages
more is writ by the Sages
than man has yet had the merit
or pureness of heart to inherit.

*For we became mortals and sinned
as the world about us have sinned,
and we are awaiting rebirth
even as this our earth.*